

Note

Nomenclatural changes for two Australian species of *Livistona* R. Br. (Arecaceae)

The treatment of Arecaceae for the Flora of Australia is presently being prepared. Taxonomic considerations related to the treatment are being dealt with in advance of publication, and proposed name changes of two Australian *Livistona* species are presented here.

***Livistona decora* (Bull) Dowe comb. nov.**

Corypha decora W. Bull, Catal. (1887) 10. **Type:** Australia. Queensland, Yeppoon–Emu Park Rd, c. 11 km S of Yeppoon, A.N.Rodd 3069 with S.Jacobs, 12 May 1976 (neo: BRI; isoneo: BH, K, NSW, here designated).

Livistona decipiens Becc., *Webbia* 3 (1910) 301, **syn. nov.** **Type:** France. Cultivation. Nice, May 1908, A.Robertson-Proschowsky s.n. (lecto: FI) (fide Rodd, 1998).

[*Livistona inermis* auct. non R.Br., Wendland and Drude, *Linnaea* 39 (1875) 229, *pro. part.*]

[*Livistona australis* auct. non (R.Br.) Mart., Bentham, *Fl. Austral.* 7 (1878) 146, *pro. part.*]

Livistona decipiens var. *polyantha* Becc., *Webbia* 5 (1921) 15, 18. **Type:** Indonesia. Cultivation. Bogor Botanic Gardens, undated, *Beccari* s.n. (holo: FI; iso: BO).

The new combination for this species is based on the name *Corypha decora* W. Bull, which was first used by Bull (1887) for plants that were grown in his nursery at Chelsea, England, and subsequently discussed by Watson (1889) in a paper on the cool cultivation of tropical and subtropical plants. Bull's (1887, p.10) description was: "*Corypha decora*: An elegant and ornamental species introduced from Queensland. It early develops characterized leaves, which are fan-shaped in outline and divided almost to the petiole into linear lanceolate segments each about half-an-inch in breadth. The petioles are sparsely furnished with small hooked prickles. This species will undoubtedly be found one of the most useful of greenhouse palms". Watson's (1889, p. 294)

account of this palm, which he incorrectly identified as *L. inermis* R.Br., included: "...The most interesting of this genus, however, is a very fine example of the rare *L. inermis* of R.Brown, in the gardens of Villa Valetta. It has a bare stem 6 feet high by 1½ feet in diameter at the base. The head is made up of a large number of shining green leaves, the petiole of which is 6 feet long and margined with spines at the base. The blade is divided almost to the base, and it has a distinct midrib that is curved so as to produce a very extraordinary effect. The form of the leaf may be called a combination of the pinnate and palmate characters. A plant of this rare palm is in the Kew collection; there is also a fine example of it in the collection at Blenheim. A large specimen was also noted in Baron Vigier's garden at Nice. Mr Bull distributed plants of it some years ago under the name of *Corypha decora*".

The validation of the name *C. decora* precedes that of *L. decipiens*, and therefore has priority over it. The descriptions provided by Bull and Watson are attributable to the taxon. The place of publication is also acceptable as the rules of nomenclature allow for the validation of names published under such circumstances.

Beccari (1910) was apparently unaware of the use of the name *Corypha decora* when he named *Livistona decipiens* from the collection of *Robertson-Proschowsky* s. n. [FI] taken from a cultivated plant at Nice, France, and named for the deception that it had caused as to its true identity: "...il nome di *L. decipiens*, per gli errori di cui è stata causa...". In cultivation in the Riviera during the late 1800s it had incorrectly been referred to by local horticulturists as '*Copernicia cerifera*', and it was with the intention of clarifying the species' identity that Beccari provided the description and established the name. Although unaware of its origin, but suggesting that it came from eastern tropical Australia, Beccari (1921, 1931) related it to other Australian species, primarily *L. australis*. Despite it being well known and widely cultivated throughout the world, its

native origin continued to remain speculative until relatively recent times. For example, Bailey (1976) noted (with reference to the name *L. decipiens*): "...described from cult., supposedly Australian...". The first unequivocal application of *L. decipiens* to natural populations was by Johnson (1981) who recorded distribution of the species from Miriamvale to Townsville in Queensland.

Through a lack of understanding of the correct identity of *L. inermis*, and the incorporation of characteristics of misidentified specimens of other species into descriptions, *L. decora* was inadvertently identified as that species in a number of instances. Both Wendland and Drude (1875) and Bentham (1878) cited the MEL *Thozet* s.n. specimen from Moore's Creek near Rockhampton, central Queensland (now known to be of *L. decora*) in their accounts of *L. inermis* R.Br. and *L. australis* (R.Br.) Mart. respectively. Upon this basis, many specimens in both the wild and in cultivation with a deeply segmented leaf were identified as *L. inermis sensu* H.Wendl. (Hill, 1873, 1875). It is highly probable that *L. inermis* R.Br. in the strict sense was never in cultivation in Europe as it is an exceedingly difficult plant to propagate and maintain while *L. decora* seed is easy to germinate, and the plants are one of the fastest growing species of *Livistona*. The specimen A.N.Rodd 3069 with *S. Jacobs*, collected from the Yepoon–Emu Park Rd, c. 11 km S of Yepoon at BRI is chosen as the neotype as it is from the area where seeds may originally have been collected for distribution to England and Europe.

***Livistona nasmophila* Dowe & D.L. Jones**
nom. & stat. nov. *Livistona mariae* subsp. *occidentalis* A.N. Rodd **syn. nov.**, *Teloepa* 8: 81 (1998). **Type:** Australia. Western Australia, Durack Range, SE base of Mt King, A.N. Rodd 2868 (holo: NSW; iso: BH, K, PERTH, QRS).

Rodd (1998) established this taxon as *L. mariae* subsp. *occidentalis* A.N.Rodd, based on the NSW collection A.N. Rodd 2868 from Mt King, Western Australia. In the prologue, Rodd wrote: "Recognition of this population as a separate subspecies on the basis of a single wild collection (and one from cultivation) is arguably

rather premature". Following fieldwork in the Kimberleys, with collections of fruit and flowers from both wild and cultivated sources, we established that this taxon was distinct enough from both *L. mariae* F.Muell. and *L. rigida* Becc. to be recognised at species level. The correct nomenclatural procedure then would normally have been to take Rodd's subspecific epithet '*occidentalis*' and use it as the specific epithet, but the name '*Livistona occidentalis*' has previously been used by Hooker (1884, p. 64) as a synonym for *Brahea dulcis* Mart. and therefore blocks transfer of Rodd's epithet to species rank. The new epithet, '*nasmophila*' was chosen to recognise the palm's habit of occupying permanent watercourses fed by springs through much of its range.

The relationships of *L. nasmophila* are with *L. mariae*, but probably not as close as suggested by Rodd (1998). Petiole armature in *L. nasmophila* is considerably less than that in *L. mariae*. In *L. nasmophila*, the inflorescence bracts are glabrous rather than tomentose, and branching of the partial inflorescences is to five rather than four orders as in *L. mariae*. In *L. nasmophila*, fruit is purple-black rather than black as in *L. mariae*.

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